

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. This is the second time that the Sinclair Broadcast Group has used the airwaves to force their political opinion on viewers. Not too long ago, Dateline aired the names of fallen soldiers in Iraq. Sinclair decides that this is unflattering to the President and his administration, and refuses to air it. Why couldn't the airing just be a respectful memorial to the soldiers. Think of the relatives of those soldiers who never got to see that broadcast because Sinclair wants to manipulate the way viewers watch television.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.